

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
 Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of

Federal-State Joint Board on
 Universal Service

Updating Line Count Data

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CC Docket No. 96-45

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 Federal Communications Commission
 Office of Secretary

REPLY COMMENTS

BellSouth Corporation, on behalf of itself and its wholly-owned subsidiaries ("BellSouth"), hereby submits the following Reply Comments to the Comments filed on October 4, 2001 in regard to the *Public Notice* released by the Common Carrier Bureau on September 11, 2001. The *Public Notice* sought comments to assist the Commission in its determination as to whether it should update line count data for wire centers that receive universal service support.¹

1. Several commenters took the opportunity to repeat comments that they previously filed in this proceeding relating to the Commission's 2000 *Public Notice* seeking comments to update line counts for Year 2001.² During last year's pleading cycle, AT&T suggested that input values be based on projected line counts. The Commission rejected its argument by stating that it was "not persuaded by AT&T's argument that we [the Commission] should use as input values

¹ *In the Matter of Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Seeks Comment on Review of the Definition of Universal Service*, CC Docket No. 96-45, *Public Notice*, DA 01-J-1, released on August 21, 2001 ("Public Notice").

² *See generally, Common Carrier Bureau Seeks Comment on Updating Line Counts for Calculating High-Cost Universal Service Support for Non-Rural Carriers for the Year 2001*, CC Docket No. 96-45, *Public Notice*, DA 00-1626 (rel. July 24, 2000). On August 10, 2000, the

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projected line counts for the year in which support is provided. Because support currently is provided on the basis of the lines reported by carriers, rather than line count projections, AT&T's proposed solution would not resolve the purported 'mismatch' between model lines and reported lines identified by AT&T."³

2. AT&T's current proposal revised last year's proposal by mixing the projected data with actual reported data.⁴ This blending of data still does not correct the purported "mismatch" between the model lines and the reported lines and thus, should be denied on the same grounds as last year's proposal.

3. AT&T also took the opportunity to once again argue that line count data be publicly available.⁵ BellSouth has maintained that if the Commission requires BellSouth to file its line count data based on class of service, such information should be treated as competitively sensitive and not released to the public. BellSouth requests that the Commission recognize the competitive nature of class of service information and withhold any such information from public disclosure. Indeed, the Commission has recognized the sensitivity of this information in the past and has adopted protective orders to protect the information from being released to the public.⁶

Bureau extended the pleading cycle. Comments were filed on August 8, 2000. Reply Comments were filed on September 6, 2000.

³ *In the Matter of Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Seeks Comment on Review of the Definition of Universal Service*, CC Docket No. 96-45, *Order*, 15 FCC Rcd 23960 (2000) ("Line Count Updates Order").

⁴ AT&T Comments at 4, n. 7.

⁵ AT&T Comments at 5.

⁶ *See Line Counts Update Order* at 23963-23964. *See also, Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service*, CC Docket No. 96-45, *Interim Protective Order*, 15 FCC Rcd 10183 (2000).

4. Based on the foregoing reasons, the Commission should not give consideration to AT&T's proposals.

Respectfully submitted,

BELLSOUTH CORPORATION

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Date: October 10, 2001

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I do hereby certify that I have this 10th day of October 2001 served the following parties to this action with a copy of the foregoing REPLY COMMENTS by electronic filing and/or by placing a true and correct copy of the same in the United States Mail, postage prepaid, addressed to the parties listed on the attached list.

/s/ Juanita H. Lee _____
Juanita H. Lee

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